

This publisher shoots for bloodthirsty set

By Dorothy Collin

THERE ARE magazines for everyone these days—from High Times for dope heads to Good Old Days for nostalgia buffs.

Now, there is even a magazine for mercenaries, or mercs as they prefer to be called.

The magazine, *Soldier of Fortune*, is a quarterly published by Robert K. Brown of Arvada, Colo., and it is written for "the professional adventurer and for the Walter Mitty market."

Since there aren't all that many professional adventurers, Brown assumes most of the 5,000 issues he has sold thru the mail are going to the Walter Mittys, "the guys who will never get past their wives' nagging but have a desire to break away from the 9-to-5 routine in suburbia."

FOR THEIR \$2 an issue, the real soldier of fortune and the Mittys get an inside story of CIA involvement in the assassination of Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo, an article about the legendary Col. Mike Hoare and his fellow adventurers from Belgian Congo days trying to find jobs in Angola, and a stunning photo of a black Rhodesian soldier with a six-inch hole in his head.

There are also articles on an array of fierce-looking weapons, including "Deadly Designs from the Super Spy Black Bag of Dirty Tricks" such as the "Aunt Jemima," a high-explosive mixture camouflaged as flour, and the "William Tell," a rubber-powered crossbow that fires a steel-tipped dart at 180 feet per second.

And there is a helpful article on underwater knife-fighting, which includes pointers on how the fighter can come from behind and "grab his opponent's hair for leverage, then cut his throat or air hose," plus another on "Urban Street Survival, How to Defend Yourself Against Those Whose Hearts Are Not Pure!"

THE MAGAZINE is loaded with gun and knife ads for such trinkets of the trade as the M1A, a semi-automatic rifle similar to the U.S. Army's M-21, and the Morseth sleeve knife, "a weapon of last resort."

There also is a classified ad section with an ad for "Sensation Intelligence Letter," which "describes trends in international violence, espionage, karate, mercenaries, brawlers," and an ad placed by a "German national" who "seeks employment as mercenary on full-time or job-contract basis, preferably in Latin America."

Another ad was placed by a young man who "will do anything difficult or dangerous for new or good used, medium-sized motorcycle."

ONE OF THE most interesting things about the magazine is the pub-

lisher. Brown, 42, is unusual.

A graduate of the University of Colorado with a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in political science, Brown has been and still might be a soldier of fortune. His exact status is delicate because the United States government frowns on citizens fighting for foreign governments.

In fact, the State Department threatened to investigate him a few months ago after he marketed information kits on how to find adventurous employment overseas. There were suspicions that Brown was recruiting mercs to fight in Rhodesia, but he denied it and offered to take a lie test to prove his innocence.

At one time or another, Brown, who looks like a merc, has been an Army counterintelligence agent, a pro-Castro activist who became an anti-Castro adviser, a "peripheral observer" during a 1966 Haitian adventure, and a Green Beret intelligence and political warfare officer in Viet Nam. He is a captain in the U.S. Army reserves.

He also parachuted into Peru in 1970 as part of a team that took in rescue supplies after earthquakes devastated the country.

BROWN SAID the idea for his magazine "had been rattling around in my head for several years," but the impetus was the success of the merc kits that got him in trouble with the government.

He defends the reputation of mercs, saying: "They aren't all good and they aren't all bad. There have been good ones in our history like Von Steuben and John Paul Jones. The Flying Tigers were really mercenaries."

As for his own further adventures, he said: "It's all predicated on what presents itself. Africa continues to boil. And then there's Portugal. . . ."